

PATENT SPECIFICATION

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(54) GAMING MACHINES

(71) We, BELL-FRUIT MANUFACTURING COMPANY LIMITED, a British Company of Leen Gate, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2ND, do hereby declare the invention, for which we pray that a patent may be granted to us, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in and by the following statement:—

10 This invention relates to gaming machines.

Gaming machines of many different kinds are well known. These machines are usually installed in special amusement centres, such as in amusement arcades, or are installed in private or public places where social gatherings occur, such as in clubs or public houses.

20 An object of the present invention is to provide gaming machines for use in self-service stores or super-markets so that customers who have made purchases are offered, free of charge, the chance of winning a prize, preferably in the form of a discount, by playing a game on a machine. The customers are thereby given the chance of winning a prize which will serve as an incentive for them to patronise the store.

30 The present invention consists in a gaming machine on which a player can play a game that results in a win or a lose and which is adapted so that a player can insert a ticket into the machine prior to a game and a record of whether that game results in a win or a lose is made on the ticket. The ticket will preferably be the sales ticket which customers are issued with from a cash register in a store, and an indication of a win recorded on the ticket as a result of a game on the machine entitles the customer/player to a prize.

45 Preferably, the gaming machine includes sensing means, such as photo-electric means, which senses the insertion of the ticket and automatically initiates the game on the machine.

The insertion of the ticket may be all that is necessary to initiate a game on the

machine. Alternatively, the machine may be connected to a cash register so that operation of the latter in totalling a customer's purchases automatically presets the gaming machine ready for initiation of a game thereon by the customer's subsequent insertion of a ticket.

The invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:—

Figure 1 is a schematic diagram of an embodiment of the invention comprising a gaming machine alone, and

Figure 2 is a schematic diagram of an embodiment of the invention comprising a cash register and gaming machine connected together.

The amusement machine shown in Figure 1 is a gaming machine of the kind commonly known as a fruit machine comprising random selector means 1 which operates during each game to present a random selection of symbols in a row in a window 2, and win decoder means 3 which determines whether or not the selection of symbols presented in the window 2 is or is not a prize winning combination and produces corresponding output signals. The random selector means 1 conventionally comprises a plurality of co-axial reels which carry symbols around their periphery and which are spun together and stopped one after another at random intervals so that each displays a symbol in the window 2. The win decoder means 3 conventionally comprises a series of electro-magnet circuits each of which includes one of a circle of fixed studs associated with each reel and a wiper contact fast with each reel and which co-operates with the respective circle of studs. For each prize winning combination the reels take-up positions such that the wipers complete a series circuit through a corresponding one of the electro-magnetic circuits and a relay in that circuit produces an output signal.

In known fruit machines the output signals from the win decoder means 3

operated either a credit unit which allows further free games on the machine, or payout means which pays out a prize in coins or tokens. In the machine illustrated in

- 5 Figure 1, however, the output signals from the win decoder means 3 control printing means 4 so that the latter prints out characters representative of the win on a ticket inserted into the machine through a slot 5. It is intended that this ticket will be the sales ticket issued by a cash register near which the fruit machine is situated in a store. Each customer will then be able to take his ticket, insert it into the slot 5 and play a game on the machine. A win will result in a corresponding win character being printed onto the ticket and it is intended that this will entitle the customer to a prize in the form of a cash discount, or the equivalent value of goods from the store, or some other advantage, when the ticket is presented to the cash register operative.

- The printing means 4 may be adapted to print different characters corresponding to different valued wins which can arise. Most conveniently these characters are simply percentage discounts or cash figures. The printing means is also adapted to print an indication of a loss on the ticket when no win occurs so that the ticket is in effect cancelled and the customer/player is prevented from claiming the benefit of a win occurring during subsequent games which he might play on the machine using the same ticket.

- 35 Operation of the first machine may be independent of the insertion of a ticket into the slot 5 by a customer/player, conventional means such as an operating lever or button being provided to initiate a game. Preferably, however, the fruit machine is adapted so that insertion of the ticket initiates a game. This is achieved by providing ticket sensing means 6, such as a photo-electric cell, to sense the insertion of a ticket and to initiate operation of the random selector means 1. In particular the ticket sensing means 6 may initiate operation of a programmer unit which in turn controls the operating sequence of the random selector means 1, the win decoder means 3 and the printing means 4. In an alternative arrangement the tickets may have special identifying marks applied to them by the cash register and the ticket sensing means 6 may be adapted to sense these marks. For example, the cash register might print magnetic ink markings on the ticket which are identified by magnetic sensing means 6.

- The arrangement illustrated in Figure 2 comprises a cash register 15 and fruit machine 16. The cash register 15 comprises a bank of buttons 9 which are operated to register and print onto a sales ticket the

prices of individual purchases, and a totalling button 17 which is operated to total the prices registered and to cause the total to be printed onto the sales ticket. The fruit machine 16 comprises random selector means 18 and win decoder means 22 similar to that of the fruit machine illustrated in Figure 1. In this fruit machine, however, playing of a game is controlled by the cash register 15 through an electrical connection 19 between the totalling button 17 of the cash register and the random selector means 18. By these means the operation of totalling each customer's bill automatically presets the fruit machine so that the customer can then play a game on it. This the customer does by inserting his sales ticket into a slot 20 in the fruit machine, ticket sensing means 21 sensing the ticket and initiating the game as in the fruit machine of Figure 1. Win decoder means 22 operates print means 23 so that the latter prints out an indication of the resulting win or loss on the ticket, again as in the fruit machine of Figure 1. The connection 19 may in fact be connected to a programmer unit in the fruit machine which in turn controls operation of the random selector means 18 and win decoder means 22.

It will be appreciated that although the invention has been described above as applied to fruit machines, the invention can equally well be applied to other types of gaming machine or even amusement machines which allow a player to play a game of skill and award prizes accordingly.

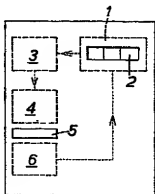
WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

1. A gaming machine on which a player can play a game that results in a win or a loss and which is adapted so that a player can insert a ticket into the machine prior to a game and a record of whether that game results in a win or a loss is made on the ticket.
2. A machine as claimed in claim 1 which is adapted so that insertion of said ticket into the machine allows the player to play a game.
3. A machine as claimed in claim 1 which is adapted so that insertion of said ticket into the machine initiates a game.
4. A machine as claimed in claim 1 in combination with a cash register adapted to register and print out the total of a number of prices of purchases, the gaming machine being connected to the cash register so as to allow a game to be played on the machine each time a total is printed out by the register.
5. A combination as claimed in claim 4 in which operation of a totalling button of the cash register allows a player to play a game on the machine.
6. A combination as claimed in claims 4 and 5 in which the machine is adapted so

- that insertion of said ticket into the machine initiates a game.
7. A combination as claimed in claim 6 in which the cash register is adapted to issue specially marked sales tickets, and in which the machine is adapted to identify these tickets and initiate a game each time one is inserted.
8. A machine as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which photo-electric means senses the insertion of said ticket and controls playing of the machine.
9. A machine as claimed in any one of the preceding claims which records said win or lose on said ticket by printing corresponding characters thereon.
10. A gaming machine substantially as herein described with reference to Figure 1 of the accompanying drawings.
11. A gaming machine in combination with a cash register substantially as herein described with reference to Figure 2 of the accompanying drawings.

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FIG. 1.FIG. 2.